

The following weblog entry from September 2004 summarizes my comments on the subject:

It's bad enough that the moment the wheels touch down, you hear a dozen chimes of phones being turned on, so that people can tell someone "We just touched down." Neither you nor your loved one could wait the five minutes until we get to the gate, or the ten minutes until you get off the plane? But now we're going to have to hear you all the way from Seattle to Dallas? Oy!

(And I recall the flight I took from New York in February, 2003. The stewardess told the Orthodox Jew sitting in the aisle across from me - not that his religion has anything to do with it other than the particular outfit he was wearing - that he needed to turn off his cell phone. He held it up, still glowing green, saying "It's off, look!" Ten seconds later, it rang. I swear, if she wouldn't have lost her job by doing it, she would have taken the phone from him, thrown it on the floor, and stomped on it. I was tempted to do so myself.)

When I used to take the commuter train to and from work every day, at least once a week, there would be somebody blabbing on about some business deal or another, probably sharing confidential info with the entire car. One time, after the person had finished his conversation, I waited about 20 second, turned to my seatmate, and said in a loud voice and basically repeated the guy's conversation, something to the effect of "So, I hear company X is going to be doing a deal with company Y to bring product Z to the market. Guess I should call my stock broker, huh?" (Oh, what a look I got!)

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The small number of benefits to allowing unfettered cell phone use is greatly outweighed by the negative annoyance factor. Please disallow their use, and keep jet travel as the relatively quiet, enjoyable (cough cough) event that it is today.